

Midway moving to solve water problems

Mt lands 14 Mar 1993
By SONNI SCHWINN
Herald Correspondent

MIDWAY — During the past couple of years, Midway has taken some long strides toward solving what has been its number one problem for a number of years: a water shortage.

But there's a lot of work left to do before the water system and supply will be able to keep up with growth.

Mayor Reed Bezzant reports, "The last couple of years we took on quite an aggressive program to upgrade our storage capacity and improve our delivery system. The biggest thing the improvements have done is, it has brought more volume for fire protection."

But, with all the accomplishments, Midway water still has to be rationed because the city only owns two second-feet of water, which isn't enough for the way residents use their water. Bezzant pointed out that many of the building lots in the city are very large, and people use a lot of culinary water to water their lawns and gardens.

"We're working with an irrigation company to convert water stock to culinary use," he said.

Last year, thanks to a Community Development Block Grant, the city was able to finish building two water storage tanks, an 800,000 gallon tank

Midway			
Established	June 1, 1891	Population	1600
Mayor	Reed Bezzant		
City Council	Steve Ridge, Don Huggard, Paul Arnold, Michael Bronson, Marilyn Larsen		
Council Meetings	First Thursday, 7 p.m.		
City Offices	75 N. 100 West, 654-3223		
Police	Sheriff Mike Spanos, 654-1411		
Fire	Chief Ernie Giles, 654-0486		
Water	Bob Radmall, 654-0627		
Power	Heber Light and Power, 654-1581		
Garbage	Kent Berg, 654-1661		

Herald Graphic/Bob Price

in Pine Canyon and a 100,000 gallon tank at Indian Springs, southwest of the city near the city cemetery. That nearly doubles the city's storage capacity, which had been only 880,000 gallons in a tank at Gerber Springs in Snake Creek Canyon.

In 1991, a new, 12-inch pipeline was installed along Homestead Dr., where water pressure had been a serious problem. Bezzant said that increased the water pressure by about

five pounds, bringing it up to about 33 pounds. Next, he hopes to extend the 12-inch line into the center of town.

He said the city is presently working on an agreement with the irrigation company that owns the rights to Mahogany Springs. The additional water would be stored in the Pine Canyon tank and would provide a backup source of water.

The city also widened and resur-

faced Pine Canyon Rd. last year, which many golfers use to cross through Midway to the Wasatch Mountain State Park Golf Course.

Bezzant's goal for next year, after the current plans for water system improvements are completed, is to create a computer model of the system to identify water lines that need to be upgraded. But, more important, it will be an invaluable tool for planning a dual water system for the city.

Extensive water studies have already begun, throughout the Heber Valley, some of which will result in recommendations for the design of a valley-wide sprinkling system. The CUP Completion Act, signed into law last November, includes funding for the system, mainly because sprinkling is at least 30 percent more efficient than flood irrigation.

After about a decade of stunted growth and expansion throughout Wasatch County, and a declining economy, the new U.S. Highway 40 to the north and improvements on State Road 189 through Provo Canyon helped bring a county-wide increase in new home construction.

Much of that new home construction is happening in Midway. During 1992, building permits were issued for 28 living units, including two eight-plexes, a five-plex, and a duplex, averaging \$108,400 per unit.

Water experts flow into Heber area

7 Sep 1993
Valley is the focal point of several conservation studies and projects.

By Matthew S. Brown

Deseret News staff writer

HEBER CITY, Wasatch County — Throughout the summer, Lee-Roy Farrell has had a steady stream of engineers, planners and consultants pass through his downtown office.

"I'm getting to know them pretty well," said Farrell, an engineer who was hired by Wasatch County to handle the hordes of experts overrunning the valley.

Farrell finds them not just in his office but wading through the Provo River, chatting with farmers in their fields, strolling along the shores of Deer Creek and Jordanelle reservoirs and just about anywhere else water could be found.

Considering that most of the water that quenches the Wasatch Front passes through this lush valley, it's no surprise Heber City and the surrounding area have become the subject of a half dozen water conservation studies and projects.

The latest project is the Bureau of Reclamation's resource management plan for Deer Creek Reservoir and surrounding lands. (See box.)

The bureau has hired planners to re-examine Deer Creek's resources and uses and come up with a recommendation on how to best manage the 52-year-old reservoir.

"We have found values have changed and recreation is no longer a side benefit of reservoirs," said bureau spokeswoman Lilas Lindell.

The current management plan deals primarily with water-based recreation, managed by state

Parks and Recreation. The new plan will attempt to add maintaining wildlife habitat to the more traditional purposes of water storage, boating and fishing.

"In the past, management plans focused on allocating the resources among the public users," said Ralph Becker, vice president with Bear West, an environmental planning and consulting firm hired by the bureau to draft the new plan.

"We are going to be taking an

eco-system approach, focusing on what the natural resources are, how they are interrelated and then what kind of activities can be accommodated while protecting those resources."

A similar approach is being taken with the other water projects in the valley:

Wasatch County Water Efficiency Study — Public meetings will be held in November on this \$30 million project. Part of the

Central Utah Project, the study proposes to pipe water from Jordanelle Reservoir into about 30 miles of dried-up streams and creeks in the valley, while converting farmers in the valley to sprinkler irrigation, rather than flooding fields, to save an estimated 51,000 acre-feet of water annually.

The "rewatered" streams will also provide fishing recreation, if landowners can be persuaded to al-

Water hearing

The Bureau of Reclamation will hold a public meeting Wednesday to gather input for a proposed Deer Creek Reservoir Resource Management Plan. The meeting begins at 7 p.m. in the Wasatch Middle School, 175 E. 800 South, in Heber City.

low access to streams passing through private land.

Following the hearings, engineers will begin drafting an envi-

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The Wasatch County Water Efficiency Project would require Heber Valley farmers to sprinkle their fields, rather than flood-irrigating them.

WATER

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ronmental impact statement on implementing the studies, Farrell said.

Provo River Restoration — November's hearings will also address this project, which is tied to the Water Efficiency Study but is funded separately through the Bureau of Reclamation. Project engineers are awaiting comments from a team of experts that examined proposals this summer to restore the Provo River.

The river has been deepened and diked over the past four decades to handle larger volumes of water. But environmental engineers with the Central Utah Water Conservancy District believe they can deliver the same volume of water and achieve adequate flood control by allowing the river to take a more natural course through the valley.

Increasing the Provo's sinuosity will also improve fish and wildlife habitat, the district said, which must be done as part of the Jordanelle Dam project.

Landowners on the north end of the valley like the idea because it

would increase access to more land, while those in the central and south end of the valley are less supportive because they could lose land use if the river is relocated.

Provo River Parkway — After 20 years in planning, state officials have agreed to turn this portion of the state's parkway project over to the county and lend support when needed, Farrell said.

"They are putting millions of bucks into that river and the public should have access," said Terry Green, planning manager for State Parks and Recreation.

But with the county swamped with federal and state projects, Green explained, state parks officials decided it was best to step back and let the county manage this one.

Proposals to transform the banks of the Provo River into a parkway with trails and other facilities to accommodate a blue ribbon fishery are on hold, however, until the river restoration alignment is determined, Farrell said.

Provo River Operating Agreement — With the completion of the Jordanelle Reservoir, state water officials want an agreement on how Jordanelle and Deer Creek should operate to fulfill water rights obligations while keeping

enough water in the river to maintain fish populations.

State Natural Resources chief Ted Stewart has appointed a committee of water managers and environmentalists, often at odds over management of the river, to draft an agreement by early October.

"If they can't come up with an agreement, then the state Division of Water Rights will do it, and that may not be the most efficient way to operate the dams," Stewart warned.

Jordanelle Wetlands Replacement Project — This Bureau of Reclamation \$2.2 million project to replace wetlands inundated by Jordanelle Reservoir is nearly complete. The project covers about 95 acres downstream from the dam. A series of dikes have been built, creating ponds where vegetation, insects and wildlife can thrive.

Water is piped into the ponds from the nearby Provo River, allowing biologists to control development of the wetlands, said bureau spokesman Barry Wirth. He said the dikes are complete, and vegetation should be in place next year.

The wetlands should be developed within five years, h

*This is just
one more attempt to
steal more water away
from Wasatch Co -
J. R. Murdoch started
this process many yrs ago
RKL
9-12-93*

10-12-93

OUTDOORS

High Uintas at this time of the year are out of mind but not out of fish

Spawning brooks offer fishermen opportunity for one of those sought-after great fishing trips.

By Ray Grass

Deseret News outdoor editor

10-12-93

The only thing a great fishing trip requires is fish. Good ones can do without. Whether you catch a fish or not, it's always nice to be outdoors. And, if you do happen to catch a few fish, so much the better.

Great fishing trips, though, don't come around that often. Like winning a lottery.

These would be trips where you "almost" get tired of catching and releasing fish. Where everything you throw they like. Where your arm hurts and your wrist aches, but you keep throwing line.

Last week, on three small lakes in the Uintas, the moon, stars and dinner bell must have fallen into a perfect line.

It was one of those great trips. Fish were taking flies before they hit the water. And aside from a few squirrels and birds, the lakes were vacant.

Too often fishermen write off the Uintas after Labor Day. They move to lower lakes and streams assuming, maybe, that Uinta fish hibernate, or that it's too cold or too high for fall fishing.

Truth is, the Uintas are at their best in the fall.

Evenings, yes, it can get cold. Daytime temperatures, though, are generally comfortable. The best part is the bugs aren't there. No mosquitoes, no flies, no gnats. You



Bill Christensen holds Uinta brook trout.

don't need to swat with the left hand while you cast with the right hand.

It's also one of the most beautiful times of the year in the high country. Green trees turn a rainbow of colors. This, too, is a time when big game begin to move about. Elk and moose are starting the rut and deer are get-



Byron Gunderson enjoys fly fishing on picturesque lake in the high Uintas.

ting ready.

Best part, of course, is the fishing. Water temperatures are cooler, so trout are closer to the surface, and the need to fatten up before the freeze tends to make these fish more aggressive.

This is also a time when the brooks are spawning. So are the browns, but the Uinta lakes are too high for browns. The brooks are rolling on the surface, cruising the shallows looking for spawning beds, and hitting anything that falls close by and looks at all like food.

That's what Bill Christensen and Byron Gunderson enjoyed last week on the high-country lakes — a great fishing trip.

With float tubes, fly rods and an assortment of flies, they selected a cluster of higher lakes.

The first lake produced a bunch of small brooks and cutthroat. They're entertaining fish to catch, especially on a fly rod. There's hardly any time at all from hooking to releasing. Even with a flexible fly rod they are easily brought in.

There was some surface action, but usually the sinking line pulled the fly under before a strike came.

The second lake offered similar fishing, except there were fewer strikes and the fish were a little larger. Some went up to one to one and a half pounds.

Here, too, a dark pattern, like a "Wolly Bugger" or "Wolly Worm" with a little tinsel for attraction, seemed to get the most attention.

Please see **FISH** on D4

/WED. A.M., OCTOBER

FISH

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The third lake was... The brooks here were and decked out in the colors. They were beautiful.

Often, before the started to move a fish...

Not as many fish but only because they couldn't be pulled easily. They fought more and took longer. A perfect catch.

Unfortunately, the flies gave up before chewed-up flies were known to fly fishermen. The fish kept striking.

When the last refaded, so did a great...

Not that there was. Next year... Same place. Until then, we to remember the U...

Irrigation Companies Facing Water Rights Adjudication

by Tom Noffsinger 6-7-95

Water rights in Wasatch County may undergo some changes in the near future as the state engineer re-adjudicates the right for county residents to use the state's water. The purpose of the adjudication process is to "make sure they [the water rights] are correctly described and accounted for," says Jim Riley, a regional engineer with the State Division of Water Rights who is assigned to the Wasatch County area.

By law, the State of Utah owns all the water in the state, but grants residents the "right" to its use, as long as the water is used beneficially. Traditionally, water rights in Wasatch County have been based on an early 1900s court decision, known as the Morse Decree. That court ruling essentially sets the beneficial use policy, which ultimately governs water rights in the county. "That's really the determination of a water right... beneficial use," says Riley.

However, the Morse Decree will likely be replaced by a newer court ruling, according to Riley. He says once the adjudication process is completed, he will make a recommendation to a judge, who may issue a new decree for water rights. The new decree would then determine who has the right to how much water.

Although Riley has started with the Lake Creek Irrigation Company, he says he hopes to adjudicate the entire drainage area. The process, and Riley's recommendations to a judge, may very well change water rights in the county. "If they [the irrigation companies] aren't using their water rights, I can't recommend to a judge that they keep them," says Riley. He adds he is

taking things slowly to make sure all the bases are covered. "I would like to have everything done in the Lake Creek company by the end of 1996."

The move to re-adjudicate comes largely from the changing nature of water use in the county. The water rights issue comes as irrigation water is being converted from agricultural applications to culinary use in the fast developing county. "That's what started it," says Jack Young, a representative of the Wasatch Soil Conservation District.

Young says the adjudication will establish who is entitled to a water right and how they may protect the water usage. "It will make sure everybody gets the rights they are entitled to," says Young. The process will also insure irrigation companies are putting water on land they are authorized to irrigate based on their articles of incorporation and bylaws.

A drawback of the process is some water rights may be lost if the water is not put to a beneficial use. If irrigation companies own rights to water they are not actually using to irrigate, they could lose the right to the extra water. The individual farmers would not actually take the "hit," but the entire irrigation company could lose access to water it traditionally held.

Riley says the standard for beneficial use has been to use the water right at least once every five years. If a water right user does not opt to take the water, beneficially, the right may be lost. However, he adds, only a judge may actually take a water right away from someone.

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Water Rights May Change...

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Young adds the issue gets more complicated, since water transferred to culinary use means some acreage traditionally irrigated must be "dried up."

The Wasatch County Water Board has taken steps to insure the appropriate lands are being irrigat-

ed. Developers must now identify exactly which areas of a subdivision will be watered, where the water is coming from and show which lands will be dried up. All before receiving the county's stamp of approval.

Developers may face an even larger hurdle in the adjudication process. Developers holding land

and water rights, with the idea of subdividing in the future, could actually lose their water rights if they are not put to a beneficial use in the time during the conversion from agriculture to housing. "That could happen," says Riley. But he adds anyone can apply for an extension of time to resume use of the state's water.

IN OUR OPINION

THE MOUNTAIN WEST'S FIRST NEWSPAPER • FOUNDED JUNE 15, 1850 • SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

Alternative more logical than Honeyville project

2-11-96
 Nearly everyone in Utah would agree that water projects are among the most important issues in this state where too often is heard one of the most discouraging words — drought.

But it's understandable that many residents of Box Elder County are less than enthusiastic about a plan that would put under water 3,000 acres — most of them fertile farmland — a cemetery, a historical American Indian site and wildlife habitat and send most of the water to other counties.

The Honeyville Dam is an idea that has been promoted by water managers in Salt Lake, Davis and Weber counties for years. They say the project is needed to provide water for rapidly growing Salt Lake Valley, which will run out of water some time around 2010.

The Weber Basin Water Conservancy, which serves Davis, Weber, Morgan, most of Summit and parts of Box Elder counties, is expected to be able to supply water to those areas until about 2015.

And the Bear River is the last remaining untapped water resource.

It is a forgone conclusion that somehow the Bear will have to be put to use. But the easiest and least expensive way — building a dam and creating a reservoir that would virtually wipe out a farming community 10 miles north of Brigham City and destroy water systems to other communities — may not be the best way.

Fortunately, there is an alternative. State water officials are considering postponing building the dam to study diverting Bear River water into Willard Bay instead. The reservoir, built in 1963, has plenty of capacity, but there are disadvantages to the plan.

The river water would have to be pumped into Willard Bay because of the elevation difference, and the water would have to be treated for culinary use, since Willard water is used only for irrigation. The total cost of

making the water usable and piping it south would be about \$220 million with about \$40 million needed for a canal to take water from the river to the bay.

The dam would cost between \$50 million and \$100 million, and there would still be the cost of transmission and, eventually, water treatment.

There is more to be considered than cost.

It's difficult to put a price on Utah's rapidly disappearing farmland. It is precious, and, as the saying goes, they're not making any more of it.

Salt Lake and Davis counties have allowed development to eat up nearly all the fertile land there. It seems ironic that now those counties want to eliminate farmland in neighboring areas to support those developments. Though some farmers are willing to sell, can Utah afford to give up fertile ground?

There is also the long-held premise among Utah lawmakers that those who use water should pay for it. Using state funds for a Box Elder project to benefit primarily the Wasatch Front urban counties would violate that premise.

Salt Lake County Commissioner Randy Horiuchi said a year ago his constituents should get more involved in conservation and recycling before demanding a multimillion-dollar water project.

Horiuchi told a Tremonton lawmaker the state should explore other options and should try more stringent conservation measures before committing to the Honeyville Dam project. He has a good point.

The dam proposal has advantages and disadvantages, but if an existing reservoir can be used, that seems a better choice than creating a new one, especially when those most impacted by the dam would receive the fewest benefits.